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MINNTER BROS.

## THE OPIUM HABIT.

### Confession of One Who Struggled With the Demon.

The following confession is written, not with the view of obtaining notoriety, for beyond the editor's sanctum, it is my wish that my name shall remain unknown, nor is it a mere sensational sketch drawn from the imagination, but a true history, given as a warning against an evil that is becoming but too common in our Chinese infested country, and to inspire, if possible, the sinking victim of the opium habit with hope and courage to break off from a vice, whose only fruits are wretchedness, inanity and death. That by a determined resolve the habit may be broken, I know, not alone from my own experience but from others who have fought it with equal success. I am aware that physicians generally regard this habit as incurable, save by a long course of "tapering," which ends in nine cases out of ten in getting the "taper end the biggest." At the age of 20 I made the acquaintance, at a small town in the western part of Missouri, of an old doctor, who had for many years acted as surgeon in the British navy, being quartered for the principal part of the time in the Chinese seas, and it was there that he became a slave to opium. Old before his time, when I first met him, he had given up all active pursuits and calmly awaited the death which he knew would not be long deferred. I do not think that, during our acquaintance, he ever made an effort to break the habit, and perhaps in his case the task was hopeless, and he finally died in spite of every effort to save him, bequeathing me, as his

ONLY LEGACY, the one habit that had destroyed a most promising career in him. It was not for several years that I fully gave myself up to opium. The death which was something terrible, rather frightened me, and it was only when driven to desperation, by disappointments unnecessary here to mention, that I finally yielded myself to the demon. But when I did so it was no half way measure. The effects of the opium habit are something terrible. The most entrancing visions at times would pass before my eyes. The most lovely landscapes, the bluest skies, the sweetest warbling of birds, all these sights and feelings took possession of my frame, and I thought I was in Paradise. I was a king and voluptuous maidens sought to soothe me with the light touch of fairy hands, which only carried me higher and higher into the realms of pleasure until I thought that I should burst every vein, annihilate my material body and become a spirit—owing no allegiance to any power and untrammelled by time and space I revelled in that atmosphere of delight, giving reign to every wild desire, using up a year's vitality in a moment of time. I actually felt near Heaven, for my vision was clearer and the sunbeams seemed to whisper that the supernatural was real, and that no man could doubt the Divine origin of all things after the glimpses of the Infinite which had been vouchsafed me. And then what happened? The words

"BLACK, ACCURSED HELL" would re-echo from every fiend's mind in the land, it asked that question. The ecstatic visions and sensations by degrees vanished, and cold, black chills would creep over me. The quick, hot flow of blood through my veins was stopped, and leaden weights were dragging me down, down, until I gasped and felt that I could choke. Then came pains and indifference—walls of lead seemed to close around me. Then indifferent to every interest in life, I left my home at the age of 24 years for another part of the state, not with the idea of bettering my condition, I now believe, that my only desire was to lose sight of all my old associates, and from that day I became a full-fledged opium fiend. Every grain that nature could stand I swallowed, and often my life was saved by vomiting the drug. But under its influence, I found no happiness, but a sort of influence that was a vast improvement over the regret of my other moments. For two years I continued to increase the dose day by day, until the quantity consumed was enormous, enough to kill ten men in a normal state. But opium was now the master and I was wretched without it. Sleep was at times impossible. I began to lose my appetite, and I had barely sufficient intellect to realize that I must

#### CONQUER THIS HABIT

or soon go as my old friend had gone. I lay no claim to more than ordinary strength of will, and weakened as I was at the time, God

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knows where or how I gathered the courage to turn upon the demon, but something awakened my slumbering energies and I resolved one day to quit the habit not gradually, but at once and forever. I felt that in the attempt I was challenging death to the combat. One thing, however, I did not know, and perhaps such knowledge would have paralyzed all my returning energies, that ahead of me were sufferings, such as few mortals are called upon to endure, not physical alone, these can be endured, and require only brute courage, but the mental torture was something more terrible than words can tell.

Conceive if you can, an existence void of hope, the past a desert robbed of all beauty, the future a hell. It was thus I stood alone, for to none did I confide my past history, now my present resolve, but in solitude I fought against all my craving for the drug, my despair verging closely upon insanity, physical torture almost beyond endurance, and alone I conquered. In ten days I was changed, memories of the past again passed, hope smiled in the future, there was beauty in the sunshine, in the flowers and music for years unheard in the song of the birds—I was saved. Bodily pain I still suffered, but at this I could laugh; my stock of opium was thrown away and from that day to this I have not knowingly touched the accursed drug. I have refused its aid while suffering from acute attacks of rheumatism, that robbed me of sleep days together, choosing death by any other mode rather than this, the most insidious vice known to man. In Missouri today, there are hundreds of valuable lives going to destruction from this habit, perhaps not a few among this number realize their danger and are anxious to quit, but shrink from an ordeal which they regard as sudden death. To these I would say there is yet hope. That to quit the opium habit nothing more is needed than a fixed resolve. If death ensues, it is better to die bravely in the effort than to linger an object of loathing to all around you and die at last a gibbering idiot.

T. M.

Highest of all in Leavening Power.—U. S. Gov't Report, Aug. 17, 1889.

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## A WOMAN'S STRANGE WILL.

Her Babe, if a Daughter, to Have a Fortune—if a Son, Only a Dollar.

East Somerville, Mass., Nov. 22.—At the old Conant homestead, on Pearl street, about three weeks ago Mrs. William E. Blaikie died a few hours after giving birth to a son. For weeks she had felt that she would not survive the birth of her child. Her own mother had died when Mrs. Blaikie was but few hours old, and a former wife of her husband had also died under similar circumstances.

These facts intensified her forebodings and she made every preparation for death. Shortly before that event she made the will whose strange provisions have just become known. It provided that if her child was a daughter, she should receive all her mother's property, with the exception of her diamonds, which should go to Mr. Blaikie. But if the child were a son, all the mother's property, with the exception of the one dollar necessary to legally establish the son's birth, should go to her husband.

What led to the drafting of so strange a will? Why did this young mother leave her son entirely unprovided for? No one seems able to answer.

Mrs. Blaikie was the granddaughter of Ezra S. Conant, a wealthy wholesale grocer of Boston. When her mother died, her grandparents took her to live with them, and from them she inherited a good deal of property. She married William E. Blaikie, now an architect in Boston, and after the death of the old people, went with her husband to live in the old homestead where she had spent her girlhood. It was there she died.

But why should she wish to disinherit her unborn son? No one can tell.

## MYSTERIOUS DEATH.

Mrs. Osborne's Remains Found on a Bleak, Wild Texas Prairie.

San Antonio, Tex., Nov. 21.—These dispatches two months ago related the finding of the buggy and trunk of clothes of one Mrs. Osborne, of Austin, on an isolated prairie in Karnes county. The affair has been a mystery and source of great grief to the aged lady's friends since then, and every means has been exerted to trace her whereabouts and learn of her fate. A discovery was made yesterday which puts a still crueller aspect on the mystery. A cowboy in rounding up cattle in one of the big pastures in Karnes county, on the 19th, came across the skeleton of a woman in a little clump of bushes. The name on the tattered clothes showed that the bare bones and gruesome skull were those of Mrs. Osborne. She had been food for the wolves and buzzards. Her body was found a mile or two from the spot where her buggy and trunk were discovered two months previously. Whether the woman was murdered, committed suicide or starved to death on the bleak, wild prairie is not known, nor is it known how she came to be traveling through the country alone.

—J. H. Hill, secretary of Recievers Cross and Eddy of the M., K. & T. railway, was in St. Louis yesterday.

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## No Tramps Need Apply.

Moberly, Mo., Nov. 22.—This city and surrounding country of late have been terribly annoyed with tramps and thieves. Yesterday afternoon Officer Dan Merry landed seven tramps behind the bars, two of whom were charged with stealing an overcoat belonging to Postmaster Stigom, of Cairo. The names of the two charged with the theft are Michael Cosgrove and Owen Kiernan. Quite a number of articles of value have been spirited away in this immediate vicinity within the past few days.



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